

WE CLAIM:

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- 1 A power door latch assembly for engaging a door striker, comprising:
a ratchet for engaging the striker, the ratchet being rotatable between a closed position and an open position and including at least one detent surface and biasing means for biasing the ratchet towards the open position;
- 5 a pawl for engaging the at least one detent surface to selectively resist rotation of the ratchet towards the open position;
- 10 a drive actuator including a prime mover, an output member in engagement with the rotary actuator, and a releasable coupling coupled between the prime mover and the output member for selectively transferring torque between the prime mover and the rotary actuator;
- a drive controller for controlling operation of the drive actuator, the drive controller being coupled to the releasable coupling and being configured for disengaging the prime mover from the rotary actuator when the ratchet is disposed in one of the closed and open positions; and
- 15 a rotary actuator characterized by said rotary actuator having a cinching arm engaging said ratchet upon rotation of said rotary actuator in a first sense to rotate the ratchet towards the closed position, and said rotary actuator having a releasing arm engaging said pawl upon rotation of said rotary actuator in a second sense opposite said first sense to disengage the pawl from the at least one detent surface.
2. The power door latch assembly according to claim 1, wherein the rotary actuator is rotatable through a null position wherein the rotary actuator is disengaged from the ratchet and the pawl.
- 20 3. The power door latch assembly according to claim 2, wherein the drive controller is configured for disengaging the prime mover from the rotary actuator when the rotary actuator is disposed in the null position.
4. The power door latch assembly according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the rotary actuator includes a lost motion linkage for allowing limited rotational movement of the ratchet relative to the rotary actuator when the ratchet is disposed in the open position.
- 25 5. The power door latch assembly according to claim 4, wherein one of the at least one detent surfaces is disposed for providing in cooperation with the pawl a partially open position between the open and closed positions, and the limited rotational movement is provided between the open and partially open positions.
- 30 6. The power door latch assembly according to any one of claims 2 to 5, wherein the drive controller includes a first switch for selectively operating the prime mover, and the pawl includes a finger disposed for engagement with the first switch when the rotary actuator is disposed in the null position.
7. The power door latch assembly according to any one of claims 2 to 6, wherein the drive controller includes a second switch for selectively operating the releasable coupling, and the ratchet includes a cam surface disposed for engagement with the second switch when the ratchet is disposed in the closed position.
- 35 8. The power door latch assembly according to any one of claims 1 to 7, including a manual release lever, and the pawl includes an arm coupled to the release lever for releasing the pawl from the ratchet upon activation of the release lever.

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9. ~~The power door latch assembly according to any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein the ratchet is disposed for rotation about a first axis, and the pawl is disposed for rotation for about a fixed axis parallel to the first axis.~~
10. The power door latch assembly according to claim 9, wherein the drive actuator is disposed for rotation about the first axis.
- 5 11. A door assembly comprising:
a door pivotable about a door axis and including a latch operation lever and an aperture for receiving a striker plate therein, and
a power door latch assembly according to any of the preceding claims, the power door
- 10 latch assembly being disposed within the door and being in communication with the latch actuation lever for selectively securing the door to the striker plate in accordance with a state of
~~the actuation lever.~~

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